When Worlds Collide
Implementing a Joint Computer Help/Reference Desk
Carleton College—Northfield, MN

The Research/IT Service ("research it!") in the Library

Research/IT provides a more convenient and integrated service to the students and aids in collaboration between the Gould Library and ITS.

- Student computing worker provides software assistance and troubleshoots equipment problems and login issues
- Reference librarians freed up to spend more time helping students with research
- New technology supports research using large data sets, GIS, and future research trends
- Students able to produce papers, presentations, multimedia projects in the same setting where they conduct their research
- New furniture that can be reconfigured into different arrangements

What worked?
SCIC worker on site to troubleshoot printers, password problems, server space
Librarians able to spend more time on reference questions and other software like EndNote and GIS
The TWiki for sharing information
Interaction between SCIC student and librarian

What was difficult?
Scheduling enough training time
SCIC workers adjusting to being off-site
Carleton students confused about the service, not realizing the student worker was a SCIC worker
Lack of publicity
Establishing new lines of communication

What's next?
Evaluation and assessment
Promoting the Research/IT services
Improving processes, training, service, and interactions between librarians and student workers
Increasing expertise in selected technology

The new desk arrangement
New furniture for individuals or small groups
New multi-media group work space

Implementation Process

Joint Planning Committee

Library: ITS
College Librarian: Director
Head of Reference: Associate Director for Academic Computing
Library Technology Coordinator: Student Computing Coordinator

Service Grid (Partial)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICES PROVIDED</th>
<th>Internal IT</th>
<th>SCIC/ITS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interfacing systems</td>
<td>ENDNOTE, news aggregators, MyMuse</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Voting and evaluating tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>MyMuse, Academic databases, Powerpoint, Word, e-mail, etc.</td>
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Student Exchange

The Midwest Instructional Technology Center-funded a program to exchange students between Carleton and DePauw.
DePauw student Mike Knight interviewed library and IT staff about their expectations, produced report with detailed recommendations.

Scheduling

Evaluation

Interviews with Research/IT desk student workers
Survey students
Feedback from reference librarians

Cultivation of expertise is addressed through the development of a "collective brain," a TWiki-based information resource that is easily searchable and editable by all student workers and librarians.